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## **JUDGE'S RULING LIMITS YELLOWSTONE SNOWMOBILE ACCESS: BRC APPEALING DECISION**

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POCATELLO, ID (December 17) -- Yellowstone National Park opened its gates to snowmobiling today. This is the thirty-fifth year for snowmobiling access to the Park, but it will be the last year, based on a decision on Tuesday, December 16, 2003. The Judge, Emmet Sullivan of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., ordered to set aside a recent National Park Service (NPS) winter use plan and rule that allowed for reasonable limited snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway. The ruling severely cuts back the number of snowmobiles allowed in the park this winter, and phases out snowmobile use in the three parks in favor of multi-passenger snowcoaches for the 2004-2005 season.

The BlueRibbon Coalition, along with other members of the snowmobile community, is filing a motion today for emergency relief with the Washington D.C. court! The Coalition feels that the plan for winter recreation in Yellowstone was a reasonable one and plans to prove that in court.

Jack Welch, President of the Coalition, stated today "Snowmobile access to Yellowstone is important. It is the best method to visit in the winter! Under the judge's ruling access will be so limited that thousands of families will not be allowed to visit their national park this winter and that is why we are filing our motion today."

Bill Dart, BlueRibbon Coalition Public Lands Director, commented, "The new plan for winter access to Yellowstone more than adequately addressed the environmental issues while still allowing visitors to utilize the most popular transportation, snowmobiles. It allowed for both guided commercial visitation and private groups to experience their national park! "The new decision allows very limited commercial guide access to the park at levels less than 25% of historical use and that is wrong."

Welch stated in his closing comments "BlueRibbon and its partners in the snowmobile community are up to the task at hand! We will continue to aggressively defend public access to Yellowstone and plan to enjoy snowmobiling in the park this winter."

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The BlueRibbon Coalition is a national recreation access group that champions

responsible use of public lands. It represents over 1,100 organizations and businesses with approximately 600,000 members.